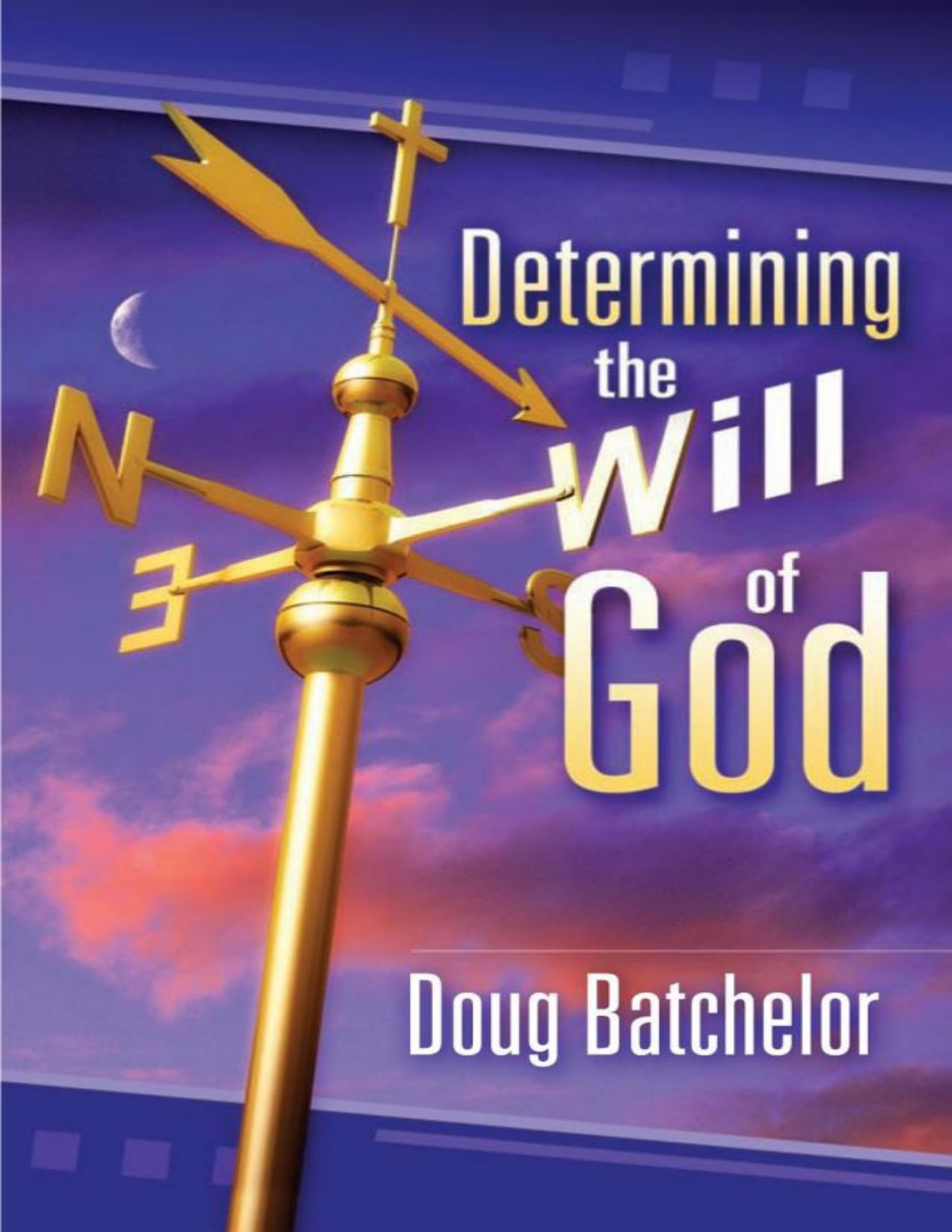

Determining
the
Will
of
God
Doug Batchelor

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Printed in the USA.

Published by:
Amazing Facts, Inc.

P.O. Box 1058
Roseville, CA 95678-8058
800-538-7275

Text design by Greg Solie • AltamontGraphics.com
Cover design by Haley Trimmer

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“I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.”

—John 6:38–40

In 1692, the city of Port Royal, Jamaica, literally slid into the sea when it was struck by a massive earthquake. Many had predicted that this corrupt city of pirates and cutthroats would one day suffer God’s judgment. Therefore, the disaster surprised no one, least of all the handful of religious men who were swept to their doom along with the wicked. One such man was Lewis Galdy, who was born in France but left for the New World in search of religious freedom. When the first violent shock came, Galdy was buried deep beneath the earth. Amazingly, he remained conscious and understood what had happened. He resigned himself to the will of God. But much like Jonah in the belly of the sea monster, a few moments later, the ground shook a second time and exploded, throwing Galdy flying high through the air and out over the churning sea. He landed unhurt in the water and swam until a boat picked him up. Galdy lived for 47 years after his miraculous escape. He died in 1739 and today his tombstone still tells the story of his amazing experience.

The safest place in the world to be is in the middle of God’s will.

It doesn’t matter if you are surrounded by war, typhoons, tornadoes, volcanoes, or earthquakes; if you’re in the middle of God’s will, you have nothing to worry about. The Bible says, “The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17 NKJV). If you are following God’s will, you have eternal life.

David Livingstone said, “I’d rather be in the heart of Africa in the will of God than on the throne of England out of His will.” If being in the will of God means that you’re working in some lonely, distant, mosquito-infested mission field, you are still in the best place you could possibly be.

As a pastor, I often hear the questions: “How do I know that I’m doing what God wants me to do? How do I determine the will of God for my life?” These are very good questions. In fact, they’re the most important questions you can ask as a Christian. Why? Because Jesus taught us to say “Thy will be done.”

Of course, we all must abide by the general principles regarding the will of God, which are universal. It is God’s will for everyone to be holy, loving, and true. But at the same time, the Lord has individual plans for each person that are as varied and unique as snowflakes.

This short book is going to focus on the biblical principles that will help you find God’s will for your life.

Not a Chance?

Before getting into a list of ways we can apply biblical principles to determine the will of God, let's first address some of the dubious methods people often use.

To start with, Christians should avoid resorting to methods that amount to flipping a coin. I'm not saying God cannot speak through a coin, but coin tossing is something they do in football games. It might work for the NFL, but if I'm making a life decision, I want more direction than heads or tails.

Of course, in the Bible, some issues were decided by casting lots. Normally, a group would take a clay jar with a narrow opening and put in a number of stones of one color and one odd stone of a different color. The stone mouth was just big enough to shake out one stone at a time. The jar would go around from person to person, each shaking the vessel and dropping out a stone. If the off-color lot fell on you, it meant that you were chosen as a leader. (They also cast lots for Jesus' clothing and on Jonah's "fishing" trip.)

You might flip a coin when the family is trying to decide whether to eat Mexican or Chinese for dinner. However, casting lots when making big decisions for your life is not advisable. God wants you to use your brain. He even says, "Come now, let us reason together." You should never say, "Whom shall I marry? Well, I'll cast lots." That system won't impress your potential in-laws. Rather, you want to be using a number of biblical criteria, which we'll discuss a little later.)

When the priests picked the two goats on the Day of Atonement, they selected two perfect specimens. One would be chosen as the Lord's goat, and one would be the scapegoat. They cast lots to determine the scapegoat. The point is that they were choosing between two goats that were identical in nature. (It could be that God did not wish for humans to be proud they decided the final outcome.) In that sense, casting lots is okay. But when making big decisions, be thoughtful and don't leave it to chance.

And sometimes when flipping a coin, a person doesn't get the side they want, so they say, "Let's do two out of three." They just keep on flipping the

coin until they get the result they want. I also know someone who was praying about a big decision, and he wasn't sure whether or not he was to flip a coin to choose between the available options. He flipped the coin, and the coin rolled over against the wall and stood up on its end! It's like God was saying, "Don't do that! You're giving me just two options. I might have a thousand options you know nothing about." Don't corner the Lord by using this kind of method. You're trying to limit how God is going to answer you. So use your brain and pray for divine wisdom instead.

Getting Fleeced

When Gideon was trying to get reassurance that he was supposed to go into battle against the Amalekites and the Midianites, he put out a fleece—a sheepskin for a kind of sleeping bag—in the field. He said, “If I wake up in the morning and there’s dew on the fleece but not on the ground, that will be a sign.” Well, that happened. Then he thought, “Well, maybe that’s a natural occurrence. Lord, let’s try this one more time. Tomorrow let the fleece be dry and the dew on the ground.” That’s how it happened, and finally Gideon felt reassured.

Some people have all kinds of different fleeces that they put out for the Lord, and sometimes it’s not bad to say, “All right, Lord. I’m going to look for providential evidence.” But we can get into a pattern of throwing out fleeces to test God’s will, never willing to go with the answer from the fleece the night before. Nothing will give you assurance in God’s will like the list below. There might be a time for it, but avoid getting yourself into the habit of throwing out fleeces.

Bible Roulette

The daughter of a famous evangelist once told me the story of when her mother was praying about whether or not to marry a young, handsome evangelist. She said, “Lord, I have to know this is your will.” She prayed and agonized, needing reassurance that this was the right man. So she took her Bible and flipped it open. She was praying with her eyes closed by her bed, and she put her finger down on a verse—when she opened her eyes, it was on Genesis 24:58, which says, “They called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.” When you pray about whom to marry and you flip the Bible open and this is the place where your finger lands—that’s a pretty strong indicator.

You’ve probably met someone who makes decisions by quickly flipping through the Bible and, wherever their finger lands, he says, “That must be God’s message to me.” Once again, be very careful about using your Bible like an Ouija board. I’m not saying that God is incapable of leading in this way; sometimes the Lord winks at our ignorance (Acts 17:30). But I don’t think it’s advisable if you lack a strong relationship with God. You might flip your Bible open and plop your finger down where it says Isaiah walked naked and barefoot three years (Isaiah 20:3). That’s obviously not His will for your life, so be careful.

Dreams, Visions, or Hallucinations?

Can God guide us through a dream? He can, but the majority of your dreams are just gibberish that comes when your brain is defragmenting the things you've experienced through the day, kicking all sorts of bizarre things through your mind (Ecclesiastes 5:3). Some people have weird dreams, so they visit a psychoanalyst who helps them try to understand if there is any hidden meaning in them. But sometimes it's just too much pizza before bedtime. Don't put a lot of emphasis on making a life decision based on your wacky dreams.

And finally, regarding visions, you've might have heard about the farmer who was hoeing in the field on an extremely hot day. He was a young farmer, and he wondered if he was supposed to spend his life doing this work. As he was pondering, he looked up in the sky and saw that the wind was moving the clouds around. All of a sudden, he distinctly saw the letters "P" and "C" in the sky. He thought it was a message from God to "Preach Christ," so he threw down his farm equipment, cleaned up, got his Sunday suit on, and started going around the community preaching. Stunned, people asked, "Zeb, what's going on?" He said, "God showed me in a vision I'm supposed to be a preacher." So he spent several months preaching, but experienced dismal results. His family was getting hungry, so about eight months later, Zeb is back out in the field hoeing corn. Someone asked, "Zeb, what's up? I thought God gave you a vision that you're to preach Christ." He answered, "Well, I've concluded 'PC' really meant Plant Corn."

Be careful about allowing dreams and visions to be primary criteria. If you're going to base decisions on dreams and visions, make sure there is reinforcing evidence. A lot of these extraordinary methods that people use to determine God's will are reserved for when He speaks to chosen prophets. If that's not you just yet, take a moment now to discover some biblical and common-sense ways to discern the will of our Creator.

Okay … Now Where Do We Begin?

We face a lot of big decisions in our lifetimes. When young people get out of high school, they need to ask: "What college will I attend? What will I study? Will I even go?" Then they must decide about a job and a spouse. "What job should I pursue? Who am I going to marry? Do I say yes to the first person who asks? Should I marry at all?"

Before we get into determining what God would have you do in any given circumstance, let's deal with some basics. First and foremost, it is God's will for you to be saved. The Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). What you are doing in life as a vocation should take a back seat if you don't yet have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Second, when some natural disaster strikes and destroys houses, we often hear insurance companies refer to it as "an act of God." That's not always true. Not everything that happens is the will of God. As we read, God is not willing that any should perish, but some are going to perish. Obviously, you and I have also done some things in our lives that were out of God's will.

So we can't always say it's "an act of God" when a typhoon strikes and thousands die. Remember, it was the devil who brought trouble in the story of Job. I think we'll be surprised when we get to heaven and God pulls back the veil; we'll be a witness to the cosmic battle between good and evil and see that God didn't always get what He wanted.

Besides, why would He tell us to pray that His will be done if it is always done anyway? That's why we should be *pursuing* the will of God in our lives. If God's will always happens, we wouldn't have to do anything to figure it out. But it doesn't always happen, so we have to do our best to search out—and be in—God's will for the sake of His kingdom.

So I'm going to give you a brief list that will help you determine God's will in your life. This list comes from those whom I respect the most: the Holy Spirit speaking through the Bible, great Bible scholars and commentators, and friends and fellow pastors. I believe this list is both grounded in the Word of God and everyday common sense.

Be Willing and Surrendered

Someone once determined that in the United States, a person has more than 23,000 ways to make a living. The odds are not in your favor to simply guess about what you're supposed to do as a career. Instead, you want divine leading in your life. You want God to give you wisdom on how to discern His plan for you.

The first step is also the most important and often the most difficult: Be fully surrendered and willing. John 7:17 says, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (NKJV). God will let you know His will—*if* you are truly willing to do it once you understand what it is.

Ask God to give you a submissive and willing heart when trying to discern His will. Plus, surrender yourself to Jesus before expecting Him to lead you some place to work on His behalf. If your heart is in a state of rebellion and you're not surrendered, why would God show you His will? All He would do is add to your compounded guilt.

"The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way" (Psalm 25:9 NKJV). I once heard about a simple man in the Congo who prayed, "Lord, you be the needle, I'll be the thread. You go first, and I'll follow wherever you lead." That's the kind of humble attitude we need to discern God's will. You might not like what He's about to show you, but make up your mind that by His grace you will do it before you even know what it is.

Be Guided by His Word

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). When you are searching for God's will, you need to open the Bible even more than you normally would. Ask God to help you find specific guidance for your life in His Word.

Sometimes, it's even possible to find out what the Bible says on the exact options you're considering. Indeed, the Word has a lot of practical things to say about God's will. For starters, the law of God can help you discern whether He wants you to do one thing or another. That can mean an emphatic yes or no found right in the commandments.

As a pastor, I'm still a bit surprised that a lot of married Christians wonder, "Should I leave my spouse and go off with another person?" They might even say, "It just feels so right. We can see God's blessing. We've got so much peace. We see this as God's will for us." But this isn't something you need to pray about. The answer is right there in the Ten Commandments. God has clearly stated His people are never to do this kind of thing.

Okay, you want something more challenging? What if someone says, "In order to get an incredible career opportunity, I just need to work during two Sabbaths for one month until I get tenure"? Well, you don't really need to pray about that either. If God says to do no common work during the Sabbath, you already have His clearly stated will for your life concerning that job. It's a slam-dunk. "I delight to do thy will: … thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

Consider Christian Counsel

“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14). When searching for God’s will, find others who have good judgment and will be honest with you.

What kind of counsellors? “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:33 NKJV). In other words, don’t get counsel from people whose lives are a disaster; they’re probably not in the best position to give you advice. The local tavern is also not the best place to get counsel on God’s will either.

Instead, find people who are doing God’s will themselves. Do they have a consistent spiritual witness? If they’re blessed like Joseph in Egypt and you can see the hand of God is over them, they’re probably good picks for counselors. Plus, be sure to get a few different opinions—the verse says “counsellors.” If a doctor says you have a life-threatening disease and you feel fine, you might consider a second opinion. Maybe you can even find a third opinion if this is something really important.

Godly friends can help you take honest inventory of yourself and discover your gifts and talents. They might point you in a direction you weren’t even considering. Growing up, no one thought I was going to be a pastor. It didn’t even occur to me when I became a believer. But when I started giving Bible studies to friends, more and more people I respected said, “Doug, have you considered the ministry?” They said, “You need to pray about it. We think you have gifts in those areas.” So through collective counsel of godly people, I moved in this direction. God will do the same for you through good counsel, if you ask Him.

Observe Providence

"I came … to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 2:12). God will often show you what He wants you to do through providential events that happen around you. So when seeking His will, keep your eyes open.

As in the case of the Apostle Paul above, look for doors that open and close. God often guides us in His will by closing doors to some opportunities and opening doors to others.

If God closes a door, don't try to kick it down just because it's what *you* really wanted. Some of us don't want to admit that doors can be closed. Like Balaam, we're beating our donkey to go somewhere, and we don't know that an angel in standing in our way. You might even miss the wide-open door full of blessings that's just around the corner. You won't see it because of your stubborn tunnel vision.

In fact, God will often permit you to do something that is not His will because you're pushing for it. It's like an overweight man at the office who says, "I'm going on a diet; I'm giving up donuts!" But the next day, he shows up with a big box of them. His co-workers ask, "Wait! We thought you swore off donuts!" He replies, "Well, it was God's will that I get these donuts. You see, before I left for work, I drove by the donut shop. That place is always packed, and it's hard to find a parking place. So I said, 'Lord, if there is a parking place right in front of the door, then I'll know it's your will for me to get some donuts.' And you know, I only had to drive around the block 10 times for a parking space to open up. I knew it was God's will!"

Be careful. Everything can go wrong when we're kicking against God's will to do our own. Remember, Balaam lost his life for this tragic mistake. Make sure you're following God's will by only going through the open doors in harmony with His Word. And He will open doors—for ministry, for opportunity, for careers, for relationships—you just need to ask.

Pray (and Fast)

"This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14, 15). When you want to know God's will, you need to pray He will guide you. But you also need to harmonize your requests with His will.

In John 15:15, Jesus says, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (NKJV).

If you want to know the will of God, be a friend of God. How do you become His friend? You talk to Him—all the time. When the angels were on their way to destroy Sodom, they stopped by to visit Abraham. God asks, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Genesis 18:17). Friends talk about their plans together, so spend time praying and talking to the Lord. God reveals His will to His friends and servants.

In addition to prayer, your discernment of God's will might include fasting, which is a deeper level of seeking clarity regarding God's will. In 2 Chronicles 20, when Israel was surrounded by her enemies, Jehoshaphat commanded the people to fast and pray. In response to their obedience, God gave the nation guidance and deliverance.

And in Acts 13, when the disciples were wondering what their next missionary endeavor was to be, the Bible says, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." I'm sure they applied other criteria, but notice that they knew the direction God wanted them to go as they fasted and listened.

Fasting often clears the mind and helps us separate the carnal desires from spiritual priorities. Put more simply, the radio reception improves.

Have Faith, But Don’t Be Foolhardy

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6). In determining the will of God, you need faith. If you’re going to pray and fast to know His will, then believe that He’ll show you His will. The Bible says the just shall live by faith, so trust that God has a plan for you and that He’s going to show it to you in His time.

One Bible scholar wrote, “When you’ve sought to know His will, your part in the operation with God is to believe that you will be led and guided and blessed in the doing of His will.” Think about that for a moment. If you’re willing to do His will, then God is responsible to reveal His will to you. But you must believe.

Yet while having faith is crucial, we shouldn’t be foolhardy. Sometimes the road we need to take is the safe one. When you’re pondering all the options in your life, if one of them is risky when it comes to living the Christian life, don’t tempt the devil to see how close to the edge of sin you can get. That’s the last move you want to make. Get as far away from that edge as you can get.

Sometimes when I’m preparing an illustration for a sermon, I think, “Boy, this illustration is a little on the edge, Lord. Should I share it?” A little voice says, “Doug, do the safe thing—don’t share it. I will give you something else to make this point clear.”

Be faithful *and* cautious when seeking His will. Don’t take unnecessary risks with your soul.

Glorify God and Don’t Be Selfish

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). When you are seeking after God’s will, make sure that the option you choose will glorify Him.

If one of your options is going to harm His kingdom, then it is the wrong option. Never forget to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

In every decision, ask yourself, “Lord, is this going to reach more people for you? What will make the biggest impact for your kingdom? How will I be the best advertising for your glory?” This is a vital factor in your decision process. It is part of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

And much like trying to consider God’s glory in our decisions, we need to remember the effect it will have on our neighbors—whether that’s our spouse, parents, children, or whoever. “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7).

I’m always saddened when I’m helping people trying to make a decision about their life, and all they’re thinking about is, “What is this going to mean for *me*? How much will *I* get paid? Will *I* like the climate?” Instead, they need to be thinking of their families and how their decision is going to affect those around them.

Galatians 5:14 says, “All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Christians should be governed by love—not just for God, but for others too. Sometimes I’m amazed by the simple faith of those I work with in ministry. They get job offers with better pay and hours, but they realize that where they are touches so many people’s lives. They realize that God’s will for them is to stay in His service where they already are.

The mature Christian doesn’t need to know what’s in it for himself. It’s a sign of true conversion when someone isn’t always saying, “What’s in it for me?”

Be Guided by the Holy Spirit

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). In searching for God's will, you need to listen for that still, small voice.

Of course, that's sometimes a very hard thing to hear. But it's a very important one to search out. How else did Abraham know when he was supposed to take his son to the altar? God will speak to you, and He will send His Holy Spirit to guide you. Ask yourself, "How am I feeling led by God's Spirit?"

Years ago, Arabs often found themselves crossing vast deserts. Frequently, someone in the caravan would have a dove. If a sandstorm came through and the caravan lost its bearings, the person would release the dove after the storm. Because of the dove's homing instincts, it would begin to fly straight home and the caravan would follow.

The Holy Spirit is sometimes compared to a dove in the Bible. Many times, the Apostle Paul says, "The Spirit said" go here; other times it said, "Don't go" (Acts 16:7). He was really in touch with the Spirit of God. And you can actually test whether it's the Spirit of God, because the Holy Spirit will never lead you contrary to the Word of God.

You want to have the tug of the Holy Spirit guiding you. The Bible says the Holy Spirit will show us the way we should go. Mature Christians will have a certain peace when God's Spirit is telling them what to do.

Be Patient and
Be Faithful to Where You Are

"We count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). In deciding the will of God, you must determine to be patient.

Sometimes we become restless and want to do just about anything but keep guessing at what we should do. We want to act sooner than later, but sometimes God wants you to wait.

You say, "But I've already been waiting so long!" Be glad. You're better off waiting for God's will having the right job, the right spouse, or the right school than rushing ahead of the Lord and having the wrong job, the wrong spouse, or the wrong school. You're going to be miserable if you aren't patient. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

Moses wanted to deliver the Israelites doing it his way and in his time. It backfired in murder, and he waited 40 years before he got another opportunity. He learned his lesson. In Exodus 14:13, he says, "Fear ye not, stand still." Often God's people didn't know what to do or where to go, but God said for them to just stand still. "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you" (2 Chronicles 20:17).

Sometimes, God's will for you is simply to be patient. (See Psalm 90:4.) Apparent delays could mean that rather than you picking an option, God's will is coming to you special delivery. You just need to stay where you are and watch what happens. God could be saying, "Stay right there. I'm going to change everything without you doing anything."

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). But while you're waiting patiently for new directions, continue to do the work at hand with all your heart. Many fail to fulfill the present will of God for their lives because they are longing for something different.

I heard that one time, the king of Bavaria got tired of all of his

responsibility in the monarchy and began to long for the life of a monk. He went to a monastery and told the head monk, “I’ve decided to join the monastery.” The monk replied, “Are you sure?” The king said, “I am.” The monk asked, “Are you willing to submit to the discipline of the monastic life? It is very vigorous.” The king answered, “I am. I’m longing for that peace.” The monk warned, “You must obey absolutely.” The king agreed. The monk then said, “Your first order is to go back to the palace and be king.” From that point, the king knew it was his calling to be a king.

Determine Your Heart's Desire

"May He grant you according to your heart's desire, and fulfill all your purpose" (Psalm 20:4 NKJV). When exploring God's will for your life, don't forget to consider what you want. Don't be ashamed of including this in your list of criteria.

Sometimes God will place things on your heart because He wants you to do that thing—and because it is in your heart, you want to do it too.

Most everyone assumes that they need to follow a traditional route in life—get married and get a job. They are so certain it's the right thing to do that they'll marry someone they don't like and become a dentist even though teeth give them the willies. But it's a myth to believe that God's will automatically means doing something we don't really want to do. If you're truly converted, He can and will often implant within your heart a burning desire to do the very thing He wants you to do. By your converted nature, your desires will begin to align with the Lord's.

Many times, you'll pray about something that you want, and God's answer will be, "You know I love you. I want to give you what you want." But the key to this is found in Psalm 37:4, which says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." If your delight is God and His will, you'll be finding out He's giving you the desires of your heart. That's exciting when you think about it. He'll surprise you!

Tally the Evidence

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1). Have you ever used a GPS device in your car? When you first turn one on, it can't tell you immediately your location or which way you need to go. You need to wait a moment as the device begins to acquire satellites. But you'll notice that it will often say "awaiting more satellites" or "awaiting better accuracy" even though it has already given you a direction to go. As it picks up another satellite, it will give you more accurate directions because of its ability to triangulate your position.

It should work that way when you are trying to discover God's will. We've looked at a number of criteria from the Bible and common sense of how you can determine the will of God in any aspect of your life. Sometimes you are going to need a number of these criteria to overlap, to "triangulate," before you can truly see where God is pointing you. You need to do a little math—add things up—and make your decision.

Make a list. Ask yourself, "What does God's Word say." If the answer isn't as obvious as you think you need, ask, "What do my counselors say?" and "Which one of my choices truly glorifies God?" Keep tallying the results until you have a decision you can stand on firmly.

When I was courting my wife, we each made a list of the pros and cons about marrying. (I hope she still remembers all the pros.) We were able to ask all these same questions, and we each ultimately made a decision based on the preponderance of evidence. Perhaps you think making a list isn't very romantic when choosing a spouse? Think it tosses out passion? Prayerfully evaluating compatibility does so much to ensure many years of blissful romance.

Are You Already There?

You might be wondering, “This is all great advice. But I’m supposed to be where I am. I believe I am in the middle of God’s will right now.” That is indeed a wonderful place to be, but chances are that at some point in your life, you will need a course adjustment.

Oceanic oil drilling used to consist only of platforms that would be anchored deep into the seafloor. Drilling from these floating barges didn’t work efficiently because drill lines and pipes would crack under the constant motion and undulation of the ocean currents. But now they can drill from sophisticated ships that make constant corrections for the motion. They have computer-controlled propellers all the way around them and they are no longer anchored in one place. The ships can actually modify their position constantly through microsecond adjustments from the computer, so they can keep drilling on the exact center.

That’s how it should be with a Christian. We need to be consistently measuring that we’re in the middle of God’s will based on the criteria listed in this book. Once you stop calibrating, it’s very easy for us to begin drifting. (Of course, you always want to be tethered to Jesus Christ, but you always need to be sure that you are!) You might be in the right vicinity of God’s will, but you still might not be in the middle of God’s will. Keep reviewing the list until you find exactly where God can use you most effectively.

Conclusion

Romans 12:2 says, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind”—why?—“that ye may prove [test] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Many otherwise faithful Christians are finding themselves doing the imperfect will of God. They are restless and unhappy. Sometimes that means they aren’t being the consistent witness God knows they could be.

Each one of us needs to strive for that good and acceptable, perfect will of God. Even though man is separated from God because of sin, He has given us a way to discover His will—and He has given us the power to do it. Be pliable clay in the Potter’s hands and keep calibrating. Not only will you have joy in heaven; you’ll have it right here on earth.

Is your life off track? Are you struggling to make the right decision? Are you afraid of where God might lead you—out of your comfort zone and into a strange land? Remember always that God doesn’t want what’s worst for you; He wants what’s best for you. You’ve got to trust Him that in the end, you’ll always be happier being in the middle of His will.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Eventually, everyone in heaven will be doing the perfect will of God. If we want to be there, we must start practicing right now!



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